



## 2.20 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Purpose Statement

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for emergency and evacuation and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACECQA, 2021).

Emergency situations in a Family Day Care (FDC) service may arise for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to:

- a. Fire, including house, building, grass and bushfires or other natural disasters, such as flood, cyclone, earthquake or severe storms (i.e. thunder or dust)
- b. Incidents causing an injury or fatality (e.g. electrocution).
- c. Any incident that results in structural damage to buildings or which render the building unsafe (i.e. gas explosion)
- d. Power and/or telecommunications failure
- e. Vehicle collision or breakdown
- f. Intruder: human (i.e. burglary) or animal (i.e. snake)

It is vital that if an emergency situation arises, staff and/or Educators are confident to manage the situation effectively and efficiently, maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children, families and visitors. It is important to note that an emergency situation could occur within the Educator's service but may also arise at another approved venue, such as playgroup, out in the community whilst on regular outings or excursions, or at an adjoining property/service.

Ensuring that Educators and children know what to do in an emergency situation requires continual planning and practice, which will be documented in each of the Educator's Emergency Response Plans. Regularly practicing the drills also provides an opportunity to help support and build on children's understanding of what to do in an emergency situation, their coping skills and resilience.

### Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casuals), Educators, children, families and visitors (including contractors) of the Service.

### Definitions

Emergency: an unplanned, sudden or unexpected event or situation that requires immediate action to prevent harm, injury or illness to individuals, or damage to the service's environment.

WFDC: Windermere Family Day Care.

Emergency Response Plans (ERPs): evacuate &/or emergency closure, lockdown & car accident. Identifies the nature & range of emergencies & hazards to which children & Educators may be exposed to & the response & procedure in the event of an emergency. Effective planning & preparation of the ERP within the WFDC environment ensures optimal response to emergencies should they occur.



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Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) & Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO): Using data on the Victorian Government's [VicPlan](#) website, a WFDC site within a designated BPA & BMO is determined to be at risk of bushfire. A WFDC site within a designated BPA only, is determined to be at risk of grassfire. If a site is not within a BPA, it is not considered to be at significant risk of bushfire or grassfire.

Grassfire at Risk Register (GARR) & Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR): An Educator will be placed on WFDC's GARR or BARR if their service address is within a Victorian BPA &/or BMO. Educator's listed on these registers are not permitted to care for children on days forecast as a Catastrophic fire danger rating.

Fire Danger Ratings (FDR): provides an indication of the possible consequences of a fire. This rating is standardised across all Australian states & territories. The higher the fire danger rating, the more dangerous the conditions. Ratings range from moderate, to high, to extreme, to catastrophic, which is the highest rating on the national FDR system. This rating indicates these are the most dangerous conditions for a fire & that leaving early or staying away from bushfire risk areas is advisable.

Bureau of Meteorology (BoM): is Australia's national weather, climate & water agency, providing regular forecasts, warnings, monitoring & advice.

Telstra Desktop Messaging: a web application that allows SMS (short message service) & MMS (multimedia message service) messages to be sent to multiple people at the same time, from a computer, laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

EPC: Educational Program Coordinator.

DET: Department of Education.

### Policy Statement

TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN AND VISITORS OF THE SERVICE ARE QUICKLY AND SAFELY EVACUATED OR LOCKED DOWN AND PROTECTED FROM IMMEDIATE DANGER.

TO ENSURE THAT EACH EDUCATOR HAS AN EVACUATION PROCEDURE IN PLACE IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL REGULATIONS.

### Procedures

#### **Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person Responsibilities:**

1. Meet all obligations under the Education and Care National Law and Regulations.
2. Use data provided on the Victorian Government's [VicPlan](#) website, to identify if a WFDC service address is within a BPA and/or BMO. An Educator will be placed on WFDC's GARR or BARR if their service address is within a Victorian BPA and/or BMO. The GARR and BARR are stored electronically in the ECECS files, in the DET folder and will be reviewed annually.
3. Ensure emergency and evacuation policies and procedures are available for inspection at the Service's premises at all times.



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4. Ensure all FDC Educators have up-to-date ERPs that identify responsibilities, procedures and actions to help minimise the impact of an emergency.
5. Check the BoM regularly to monitor emergency situations and warnings relevant to WFDC locations and keep Educators up to date with relevant information.
6. Inform Educators that a catastrophic FDR day has been declared, once notification and closure advice has been received from the respective DET regional office. **All Educators listed on WFDC's GARR or BARR must close their service.** WFDC services operating in high-risk bush and grassfire areas are not permitted to care for children on catastrophic days.
7. Where possible, provide up to 4 days' notice of a closure, due to a declared catastrophic day. Ratings are forecast using BoM data up to four days in advance, based on weather and other environmental conditions such as vegetation, however, in some instances, Educators and families may not be made aware of service closure until the very last minute (given the unpredictability of catastrophic fire conditions).
8. Confirm with the Educators and families, via email and Telstra Desktop Messaging, when a decision has been made to close a service, due to a declared catastrophic FDR. This decision will not change regardless of any updates in weather conditions or fire ratings. This will help limit confusion and help families to plan for alternative care arrangements.
9. Consult with emergency services/local authorities regarding situations that may affect the normal operation of the WFDC Service, a WFDC residence or approved venue, including during a local planned or unplanned emergency occurrence which poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the service, or where the service is inaccessible or is unsafe for children, Educators or staff and when emergency services/local authorities have directed the service to close temporarily. The WFDC Manager, Team Leader or, on request the administration team, will inform the Educator's and families, as reasonably practicable, via email and Telstra Desktop Messaging, when a decision has been made to temporarily close a service, due to a local emergency.
10. Notify Windermere's Director Services, Growth and Impact if an emergency event impacts the normal, routine delivery or impending closure/s of any WFDC services (other than when a catastrophic FDR has been declared). The Director, in liaison with the WFDC Manager or Team Leader, is responsible for notifying the DET immediately, of such impacts or closures.
11. To forward any WFDC Educator Incident Report Forms submitted to [ohs@windermere.org.au](mailto:ohs@windermere.org.au) within 12 hours of the event.

### ***Educator Responsibilities:***

1. Make all families aware of this procedure, including the possibility of service closure during a planned or unplanned emergency incident, or on catastrophic days, if operating in a high-risk area.
2. Develop individual ERPs for evacuation &/or emergency closure, lockdown and car accident (if applicable) as part of the initial safety check. ERPs must be reviewed and signed by families annually, then a copy submitted to the Coordination Unit. ERP templates will be provided for use.
3. Conduct risk assessments on emergency evacuation locations to ascertain whether it meets service requirements and the needs of the children.



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4. Display emergency evacuation diagram and procedures prominently near each exit of the approved WFDC residence/venue. This must indicate which areas are registered and safety checked for WFDC use, the location of lock-down area/s, first aid kit, evacuation bag, fire extinguisher and/or blanket, water hazards, exit points and evacuation routes to assembly points.
5. Display emergency contacts and telephone numbers in a prominent and easily accessible location.
6. Download the VicEmergency application to their mobile phone and have notifications switched on, to be aware of local emergencies.
7. Conduct emergency drills and/or evacuation practices every three months and ensure that all of the children in care complete a drill each quarter. Drills must take place at various times of the day and week, vary in scenario and demonstrate evacuation through different access doors.
8. Document emergency drills and/or evacuation practices, in line with regulatory requirements, on the template provided and submit a copy to the Coordination Unit for filing.
9. Provide children with age-appropriate support and information before, during and after emergency drills and/or evacuation practices. Inform families when a drill or practice has occurred and regularly communicate with families about emergency and evacuation procedures.
10. Keep and maintain an evacuation bag, in a prominent and easily accessible location (but one that is not accessible to children), which includes all items listed in the annual safety check. Use-by dates of applicable items must remain current at all times.
11. Ensure smoke detectors are regularly tested and batteries replaced annually.

### **Family Responsibilities:**

1. Ensure contact details are kept up to date.
2. Provide emergency contact details on their child's enrolment form and advise the service of any change to name/s or phone number/s.
3. Be aware of the service's emergency procedures.
4. Follow the directions of the Educator in the event of an emergency at the WFDC residence/venue.

### **Australian Fire Danger Ratings**

1. The FDRs for each fire district are determined by the BoM in consultation with the fire agencies. For each of the FDRs, CFA Victoria has recommended actions to follow. Refer to link at end of policy for further information.
2. On days forecast as catastrophic risk, closure advice will be provided by the respective DET regional office. Windermere will then forward that information onto Educators and families, via email and Telstra Desktop Messaging. Absences can be charged for emergency closures (as directed by the Victorian State Government).
3. On days of extreme risk Educators on WFDC's BARR or GARR are not required to close their service but to be on alert and follow their individual ERP.



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*NOTE: Educators may choose to close their service on days declared as extreme FDR. The Educator is to make this clear to parents/guardians on enrolment and will not be entitled to charge absences.*

4. On high-risk fire days Educators should regularly monitor local conditions and seek information by listening to ABC Local Radio, AM station 3LO-774, commercial radio stations or Sky News TV; accessing the VicEmergency App and/or the Welcome to CFA | CFA (Country Fire Authority) website or calling either the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 or the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.
5. Playgroups, service events and/or face-to-face Educator visits **will not be held**, in a fire district, on any days declared as catastrophic or extreme FDR. EPC's will cancel the visit or event by contacting the Educators directly. Face-to-face visits may be rescheduled or replaced with a phone visit instead.

### In the Event of an Actual Emergency

In the actual event of an emergency Educators are responsible for:

1. Contacting appropriate emergency services by calling 000.
2. Implementing their Emergency Response Plans:
  - a. If evacuating, calmly gather the children, evacuation bag, any medications required for children with life threatening illnesses and mobile phone. Follow the directions and procedures documented on the emergency evacuation diagram and in the evacuate ERP.
  - b. If going into lockdown, calmly gather the children, evacuation bag, any medications required for children with life threatening illnesses and mobile phone. Follow the procedures documented in the lockdown ERP.
  - c. If involved in a car accident, follow the procedures documented in the car accident ERP.
3. Responding to the immediate needs of all children. Provide any necessary first aid and remain calm, to assist children in feeling safe and secure.
4. Contacting the Coordination Unit, as soon as possible (but within 12 hours of the incident). If possible, the Coordination Unit will provide support and assistance to Educators where an emergency has occurred.
5. Submitting a WFDC Educator Incident Report Form to: [EducatorSupport@windermere.org.au](mailto:EducatorSupport@windermere.org.au) within 12 hours of the emergency event. Refer to the Incident Reporting procedure for further information.

*NOTE: The safety and security of children in care is the highest priority. In the event of an emergency such as fire, the educator must not leave the children unattended while they deal with the emergency, (e.g., trying to put out fire or retrieve belongings). Efforts to contain a fire by closing windows and doors may be made while collecting children, but only if it is safe to do so. The circumstances at the time will dictate as to whether an Educator should attempt to put out the fire with a fire blanket/extinguisher or left to the fire brigade.*

### Power and/or Telecommunications Outage

Reliable electric power supply and telecommunications equipment are critical in ensuring the safety, security, and efficiency of operations in early childhood services. Where a power and/or



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telecommunications outage affects the normal operation of the WFDC service, a WFDC residence or approved venue, a decision may be made to close the service temporarily.

Should a power outage occur within the Educator's service or at another approved venue, Educators will:

1. Remain calm and continue to reassure the children.
2. Assess the situation carefully and if there are no power lines down or any danger of risk of harm, move children toward natural lighting or outside to allow them to continue their activities.
3. Contact the local energy supplier to ascertain if the outage is a short temporary issue or if it will take a longer time to be resolved, requiring further action to ensure children's wellbeing.
4. If the situation will take time to be resolved, assess if the lack of power is going affect the safety and comfort of children due to no heating, cooling, refrigeration and limited, or no cooking facilities.
5. If there is going to be an extended power outage and the children may be at risk of harm, contact families and recommend that the children be collected as soon as possible. Explain that the ongoing lack of electricity has the potential to affect the safety of the children, due to the above concerns.

Reassure families that service provision will continue as soon as the power is reconnected and families will be notified when this occurs.

The WFDC service and Educators must have ready access to a telephone or similar means of communication to enable immediate communication to and from parents and emergency services. Should an issue cause a telecommunication failure within the Educator's service or at another approved venue and there is no way to contact families, the Coordination Unit or emergency services Educators will:

1. Remain calm and monitor the issue for a brief time. If it does not resolve itself within a few minutes, evacuate and gather the children in the designated outdoor area, to check for mobile phone service.
2. If possible, contact phone provider to ascertain if full phone coverage will be restored soon. If it is or will be restored quickly continue providing care as usual.
3. If there is still no service, or full phone coverage will not be available in the extremely near future, evacuate to either of your designated offsite evacuation sites, to access mobile phone service.
4. If possible, contact families and recommend that the children be collected as soon as possible. Explain that the ongoing lack of telecommunications has the potential to affect the safety of the children.
5. Reassure families that service provision will continue as soon as the phone services are reconnected, and families will be notified when this occurs.
6. If there is no phone service at your offsite evacuation site, return home, as this is the safest location.

*Note: If there has been a power and/or a telecommunications outage in an Educator's home, during care hours, a WFDC Educator Incident Report Form must be submitted within 12 hours of the event and emailed to: [EducatorSupport@windermere.org.au](mailto:EducatorSupport@windermere.org.au)*



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### Relevant Legislation/Standards

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
  - Education and Care Services National Law 2011 (Amended 2024)
  - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Amended 2024)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014)

### Related Policies/Procedures & Links

- WFDC Policies/Procedures:
  - 1.02 Excursions and Outings
  - 2.14 Administering First Aid
  - 2.21 Occupational Health and Safety
  - 2.23 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
  - 2.24 Managing Medical Conditions
  - 3.02 Safety Check
  - 4.07 First Aid Requirements
  - 7.03 Incident Reporting
  - 7.12 Assessment, Approval and Reassessment of Approved WFDC Residences/Venues
- [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)
- [VicPlan \(mapshare.vic.gov.au\)](http://mapshare.vic.gov.au)
- Emergency Drills/Evacuation Practices form: [Emergency Evacuation Practices\\_V3.pdf](#)
- Evacuate &/or Emergency Closure ERP: [Emergency Response Plan\\_V5 Evacuate & or Emergency Closure.pdf](#)
- Lockdown ERP: [Emergency Response Plan\\_V5 Lockdown.pdf](#)
- Car Accident ERP: [Emergency Response Plan\\_V5 Car accident.pdf](#)
- Emergency Evacuation Diagram & Procedures: [Emergency Evacuation Diagram Procedures V2.pdf](#)
- WFDC Educator Incident Report Form: [WFDC Educator Incident Report Form V1.pdf](#)